

El Flamboyán

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A Publication of Aspira Alternative High School

Boricuas March in Washington, D.C.

The Boricua First Affirmation Day was held on the 29th of March in Washington, D.C. Many Puerto Ricans from Chicago, Boston, Denver, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, etc, united together to fight for the freedom of the political prisoners and to speak against other issues that affect Puerto Ricans in a negative way. Among those who represented Chicago, Aspira Alternative High School staff and students were also in attendance.

This historical event allowed Puerto Ricans to recognize the political prisoners of war and to elaborate on the important issues that affect Puerto Ricans in this society. Puerto Ricans have to fight for justice and equality to better themselves and achieve unity.

The political prisoners risked their lives for the liberty of the Puerto Rican people and of the Land. It has been sixteen long years since these people have been



Aspira staff and students make their presence felt in the Capital

held in prison and the Puerto Rican people are tired of it. At the rally, Puerto Ricans demanded that the U.S. government release the prisoners for they have already served their time. Puerto Ricans signed petitions and protested verbally to bring freedom for the political prisoners.

People spoke out against many forms of oppression. They demanded better education for the future of their people; to achieve higher-paying jobs and to rebuild the communities, which can pro-

vide better living conditions. More importantly, they called to cease the violence among our people, to be able to stand tall before the federal government and before the world as dignified Puerto Rican citizens affirming the rights of our people.

Forming a group or organization can help solve our problems that exist today. The more Puerto Rican people that can come together to speak out against the problems can help benefit our people. Combining our knowledge and wisdom - we as Puerto Ricans - can help support our people endure our daily struggle and overcome it. I am glad to have been part of this first step of forming a group or organization. Marching in the nation's capital was a great start in conquering our struggle and in helping to solve our problems. However, we must remember: we need each other to become successful, to work to improve our future.

By Elias Perez

inside...

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Teacher of the Year

Evaristo Rodriguez, known as Tito to all the students of Aspira, graduated from Roberto Clemente, class of '79. He then went on to study at Loyola University. He graduated from there in 1986 with his B.A. (Bachelor of Arts) in Spanish and Political Science. Tito was raised in Puerto Rico and came to Chicago at the age of fourteen. He grew up in the Humboldt Park area. He strived for his education on his own ever since he was a boy, because he really didn't have the support of his parents. Tito had a role-model who was a teacher at Roberto Clemente. His name was Orlando Jiménez-Jiménez. Tito recalls learning a great deal from him and that is why Orlando was Tito's mentor.

Tito was a teacher since the age of fifteen. He taught people how to dance, but not within a classroom. He decided to become an official teacher, teaching within an Alternative school rather than through the Public School System, because he likes to teach in his own style and without rules and restrictions. He came to teach at Aspira in February of 1995 as a Puerto Rican History and Literature teacher. He also teaches Spanish and has a folk group Cocobalé. Tito doesn't consider himself a teacher who depends on a book to teach. He considers himself a "culture worker." This means he uses his cultural background and traditions to teach his students. Tito feels accomplished as a teacher when his students begin a process of self discovery in their cultural identity.

On March 26, 1996 at Michael Jordans restaurant, Tito Rodriguez was recognized as a Teacher of the Year by the City Colleges of Chicago Alternative Education Consortium. In addition to the recognition, Tito also recieved a book written by Jordan called: "I Can't Accept Not Trying." Tito has many plans for the future. In about eight or nine years, he is thinking of returning to Puerto Rico to pursue his dream of becoming a lawyer. That is what he always wanted to be. Congratulations Tito, keep up the good work, through you I've learned about my cultural background and I will always cherish that.

By Yesenia Ortega



Domestic Violence: A Female Perspective

By Tina Zenino

One out of every three women will be abused by a man who says he loves her. As you read this, a woman is being beaten by someone she loves. Perhaps his excuse is that the eggs weren't cooked "right," or that maybe she talks too much. By the time you finish reading this, ten more women will have been attacked by their husband or lover for a range of reasons.

Who are these women that make up these statistics? Most opinions say that these women are poor, uneducated women with too many children. But these stereotypes are wrong!! Battered women are high school dropouts and college graduates. They come from every race, religion, and from any neighborhood. They are nurses, lawyers, and homemakers. Battered women are our Mothers, Grandmothers and our Sisters.

Many women not involved in an abusive relationship would say that if their mate ever harmed them, they would leave. Many women involved in an abusive relationship swore the same resolve. But once this happens, the women rarely leave. Why do these women put up with the physical and emotional abuse? Jasmine Vega, a student here at Aspira, says: "I believe that the main reason most women stay with men that abuse them, is mostly because of fear of that person. A lot of times, feelings are very strong for him, and we all know it's hard to leave someone you love." A friend once told me that a woman will be beat about eight times or more before reporting or thinking about turning in the individual who beats her. In my opinion, there is no excuse for someone to intimidate another person. Most victims want to put an end to violence, but do not want to divorce their spouse or put them in jail.

Rap As a Form of Art

By Ricardo Ramos

Rap to me is a form of art, not just because I listen to any Ganster Rap or Hip Hop and like the beat. Rap is my talent, it's what I like to do in my free time. Usually I'm with my homies in a basement with a cloud of smoke, a bunch of lights, and a track going on so I can flow.

There are three different types of Rap: Hip Hop is mainly music that you can dance to, it's the BOMB, and everybody likes it. Another type of rap is freestyle. Freestyle rap is when you make up the rap alone as you go along. Then comes the type of rap that is called Hardcore. Hardcore rap is the type of rap that is known to let out a lot of expression and anger, and also lets you get your point across to someone. Hardcore rap also has to do with reality, telling a true story.

The reason why I say rap is a form of Art is because rap shows feelings, emotions, and rap has style. You can't just make up any old rap. A rap has to rhyme, make sense, and have quality. For example, one of these days you will see me on the mic, and know what I'm talking about.

Aspira Basketball "96": Sharp or Shot?

By Michael Lopez

Coming to school this year, I knew the basketball league would be up again and I'd be playing. My name is Michael López and I am the starting center. If you don't know what that means, it means I'm the man in the middle. To refresh your memory, last year, the Aspira Basketball Team made it to the championship game losing to Whitney Young. Now knowing that and being there, I had high hopes for this season.

Some of our star players graduated, leaving myself and a few other veterans of the team to pull together another squad. We succeeded in that. Our new squad is made up of Michael Bankston, Eliezer Camacho, Juan Diaz, Christian Medina, Shawn Zayas, Nick Cruz, Miguel Coss, Miguel Padró, and myself. Our Captain Michael Bankston and Co-Captain Eliezer Camacho are the ones trying to lead this ballteam to the championship one more time. So far it has not been easy. The whole team has talent, but after three straight losses, something has to be done. Our last game went 43-45 in overtime to Mozart B. It was a great game. Eliezer took the ball to the whole all game penetrating their defense and scoring points. With 4.3 seconds left, we had just scored, making it 43-45, their way. They inbounded the ball, Michael Bankston stole it and put a last second three-pointer to try and win the game. Unfortunately, the shot was an air ball and we lost. Both teams played hard and either team could have won.

If you have any comments or ideas to help the team, contact me, Michael López, and I'll be willing to listen.

STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

The George Guillén Case

Many people have heard about this Man. He was a husband and the father of two, who was killed by the police. This man was killed by police overseers. I may not tell you the story in actual fact by fact, but I will try my best to tell you what I know. Last October in Humboldt Park, George Guillén was having some type of attack, his wife called 911 to get an ambulance to the scene, but first the operator had dispatched a police unit, just in case the ambulance could not get there in time. So the police get there first, George is still having an attack and They claim that he was trying to beat his wife (so they say), and from there they ended up killing this poor man instead of helping him, exactly what their job was to do. These murderess overseers are protected by an asshole with power - jack o'malley (and I know that I did not put his name in capital letters he doesn't deserve respect!!!!). Either does the bigger asshole piece of shit mayor daley!. It is true if we as a people give some a little power, they think they are our god, we put them where they are now and now they do not give us respect, we are treated as if we are a lower level of the human race. Which in fact we are not. George Guillén did not deserve to die, neither did anyone else that has been killed or injured due to police brutality. As you can tell from reading my thoughts in this article that I can not stand shit like this!!

By Taogenic Roldan



SEDUCED BY MADNESS

This story is about a woman who was a teacher. She had her husband killed by male students in her class by seducing them. A movie was made about this and the actress that played the woman was Anne Margaret. The woman's husband had two kids from a previous marriage and they had a daughter of their own, his other two kids were mistreated by her. They were treated like what they were and that was step-children. This woman not only mistreated the kids but the husband as well. She had this raging jealousy for his first wife who had died in an accident. The man didn't leave this woman for fear that his kids would be hurt at the fact of losing another mother, but that was only because he didn't know how the woman treated them. If the man had known, he would have left her a long time ago. He ends up having an affair with a woman who just like him, is in a broken marriage. He eventually tells his wife about the affair and that he wants a divorce. Shockingly, he finds out his kids were unhappy. The saying about "There is nothing worse than a woman scorned,"

soon became a reality to this man. This is when she starts to plot the murder of her husband. She seduces her students to some extent sexually because she never actually has a sexual encounter with them. She pays them money and shows them things she could offer them and most definitely they would like to have, and she plays mind games with them saying they're the only ones she can trust. Soon enough she gets under their skin and they do it. Police end up finding out who did it and the kids, as well as the distraught teacher, are sentenced to jail for life. It's a shame how a person can take control of your mind, emotions, morals, and sense of what's right and wrong. It's a shame that we have people like this everywhere in business, in life, in our school. It's a shame that a teacher who was so influential to students turned her power to change lives in a negative way instead of a positive one. It's scary to know people can react so evilly when things don't go the way they want them to or they don't get what they want. It's scary that anyone can get hurt by these kinds of people, it could happen to your kids, parents, family, friends. But we live in a corrupt world and can easily be deceived. We need to be careful and watch who we trust and know how to take something someone says to an extent instead of literally.

By Marlene Ramos

Perspectives, cont'd from previous page

Why Aspira Should Consider A Nursery

By Yesenia Ortega

Many of the young mothers who attend Aspira all agree that the school should consider adding a nursery. This would be a big help for those mothers who sometimes don't have a babysitter to watch their children while they attend school. If there was a nursery available, the mothers wouldn't have to worry about missing too many classes. A babysitter is not at hand all the time and that makes it hard for us young mothers to come to school. I feel that if Aspira considers making a nursery, there will be less absences.

One of the biggest reasons why the majority of the mothers don't attend classes all the time is because they are in need of a babysitter for their kids. Any kind of emergency can come up suddenly and anyone may end up without a babysitter. For example, in my case, my mother took care of my son while I went to school. Unfortunately, she had surgery done and I missed out on school for a couple of weeks. Even though I had the opportunity to be a full-time student at home, it wasn't the same as learning in a class with a teacher. I believe that if there would have been a nursery available, I wouldn't have to miss out on attending school. It would be a good idea to consider a possible nursery. Even though this is my last year at Aspira, future students here with children can have a place to bring their kids while they study toward a diploma. They also get a chance to keep up with their children. In this way, students could concentrate on succeeding in school.



ASTROLOGY BY GENA FELDMAN

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19): AFTER SEVERAL DISAPPOINTMENTS A NEW PROMISE WILL BE KEPT. LUCK COMES FROM STANDING UP FOR YOUR PRINCIPLES. ALLOW OTHERS TO VENT THEIR ANGER. OPENLY OR THEY COULD SECRETLY WORK AGAINST YOU.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20): POWER SHIFTS. AN IMBALANCE IS CORRECTED. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS MAKE THINGS FAIRER. FOR YOU. DISCIPLINE AND WILL POWER BRING RESPECT. JOB OFFERS AND POSSIBLY LEADERSHIP IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 21): YOUR SOCIAL SCHEDULE SHOULD BE OVER-FLOWING THIS MONTH BUT, BY THE NEW MOON ON THE 18TH, YOU MAY MAKE A MAJOR COMMITMENT TO A SPECIAL GUY.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22): PLANNING A HUGE GET TOGETHER WILL REV YOU UP. YOUR NEW GUY WILL SEEM LIKE A PLAYER AT FIRST BUT HE'S REALLY A ROMANTIC.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22): DO THE UNCONVENTIONAL-ESPECIALLY IN COMPETITIONS. HARD-TO-REACH PEOPLE FINALLY RETURN CALLS. THE FORMER LOVE OF A FRIEND LIKES YOU. BOSSES MAKE PROMISES, RAISES, BONUSES, AND PROMOTIONS.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22): YOUR CREATIVITY WILL GO INTO OVERDRIVE. A HOOCHIE WILL ASK FOR YOUR NUMBER BUT HE MAY WAIT A WHILE BEFORE CALLING. WHEN A PAL HAS FAMILY TROUBLES, SHE'LL TURN TO YOU FOR SUPPORT. YOU'LL PITCH IN AROUND THE HOUSE TO HELP YOUR MOM.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22): BECAUSE YOU TAKE THINGS SO PERSONALLY YOU'LL WEAR YOURSELF OUT. YOU WON'T BE IN YOUR USUAL NONSTOP FLIRTING MODE BUT DON'T SWEAT IT. A FRIEND WILL TALK ABOUT YOU BEHIND YOUR BACK AND YOU'LL CONFRONT HER OR HIM. THINGS WILL BEGIN TO GO SO WELL FOR YOU. EVERYONE WILL BE ENVIOUS.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21): A KEANU REEVES LOOK-A-LIKE WILL ENTER YOUR LIFE IN SOME FORM TO BE ROMANTIC OR OTHERWISE. BE VERY CAUTIOUS ABOUT HIM, HE MIGHT NOT BE WHAT HE SEEMS TO BE. CONCENTRATE ON SCHOOLWORK INSTEAD OF THINKING ABOUT YOUR LOVE LIFE IN CLASS ALL DAY.

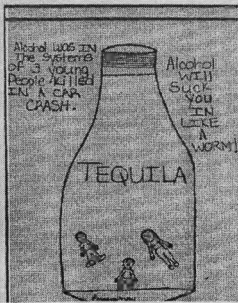
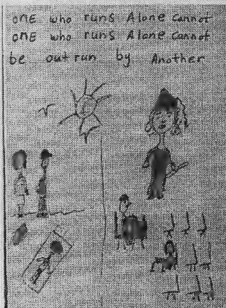
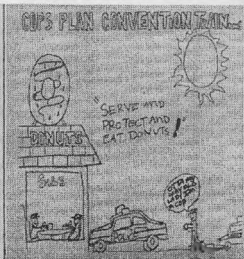
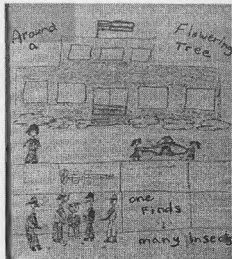
SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21): YOU'RE FEELING VERY ROMANTIC LATELY. SAGITTARIUS, YOUR DESIRE TO WRITE SYRUPY LOVE POEMS MIGHT SEEM LIKE A GOOD IDEA RIGHT NOW BUT MAKE SURE THE RECIPIENT OF THOSE POEMS CAN BE TRUSTED! YOUR CREATIVITY IS IN FULL BLOOM. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT BUT BE CAREFUL.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN 19): FINANCIAL SURPRISES FAVOR YOU, BRINGING YOU CASH AND FUTURE SECURITY. YOU ARE THE RECIPIENT OF A FRIEND'S LUCK. NURTURE BUSINESS CONTRACTS. LOVE SOMEONE YOUNGER OR OLDER. YOU TURN A DISASTER INTO A MONEYMAKER.

AQUARIUS (JAN 21-FEB. 19): THIS IS YOUR MONTH FOR LOVE. AQUARIUS, A SUPER-CLUE CAPRICORN OR CANCER WILL TOTALLY PURSUE YOU! IT SEEMS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE! DON'T TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR NEW LOVE...TREAT HIM/HER WITH AS WELL AS HE/SHE TREATS YOU. THIS COULD BE A LONG LEAD FAR INTO THE FUTURE BECAUSE IT WOULD LEAD TO DISAPPOINTMENT.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20): A CURRENT LOVER OR PARTNER MAY CREATE PROBLEMS TO GET YOUR ATTENTION. YOUR PASSION FOR AN OLD LOVE RETURNS. SEPARATIONS END WHEN YOU ADMIT YOUR MISTAKE.

Student Illustrations



EXPRESSIONS...

I was American, Ahora soy Boricua

When I was a little girl, my father never let me know my Puerto Rican heritage. I was American.

When I started school, my mother put me in a bilingual program with the hopes that I would learn about my heritage for she did not have the time to teach me. I learned about every Latin American country except my own, Puerto Rico. To the system, Puerto Rico is not a country, but a part of the United States. I was American.

I was scared to speak Spanish, and to visit Puerto Rico. I was ashamed to be Puertorriqueña, to be Jibara, because I didn't know what it meant to be those things. I was American.

Then I came to Aspira and I'm learning that my country has a history, a heritage, and a culture to be proud of. I'm learning that I have somewhere to look back to and learn from. And I have fallen in love with the country I once feared. My heart soars for a land I've only read about, aches for all she's suffered through and beats strongly for her Ideals.

Yo soy Boricua!

By Irene Hart

NO ONE KNOWS

No one knows what I go through everyday.

I try everyday to do the right thing and keep my personal problems at home, but it feels like everything keeps building up on me.

No one knows.

Sometimes it feels like everyone hates me. And I don't want to go outside and face another day. I feel like I don't have any one to talk to. But like I said.

No one knows.

Other days, like everyday, I put on a happy face and a smile. But I am always thinking that death is coming around my way. But...

No one knows.

By Tangelic Roldan



LOVE ISN'T

LOVE ISN'T HER BODY NEXT TO MINE.

IT ISN'T GETTING HER PREGNANT AND LEAVING THE BABY BEHIND.

LOVE ISN'T BEATING HER UP JUST FOR FUN.

THEN CRYING LIKE HELL WHEN SHE'S GONE.

LOVE ISN'T EMBARRASSING HER IN FRONT OF HER FRIENDS.

IT ISN'T LIFTING HER SPIRITS TO PUT THEM DOWN AGAIN.

LOVE ISN'T MAKING PROMISES YOU KNOW YOU'LL BREAK.

IT ISN'T SAYING YOU'LL GIVE, BUT YOU ALWAYS TAKE.

LOVE ISN'T SWEARING AT HER JUST TO MAKE A STAND.

HOW CAN YOU DO ALL THIS AND STILL CALL YOURSELF A MAN?

By Tina Zenino

DEDICATIONS FOR MOTHER'S DAY

Madre Mia

By Yesenia Ortega

*En silencio voy orando
Una Santa inspiración
De triste recordación
Veinte años sollozando
Madre te voy añorando
Desde aquel día final
Cuando te hiciste inmortal
Que Días te estaba esperando...*

*Hoy la Gloria vas cantando
Por el reino celestial
Hoy Tu, luz espiritual
Mi vida va iluminando*

*Meditación sublime a la madre
Cuando suelo contemplar
esa imagen venerada
de aquella madre olvidada
Siendo un dulce bienestar;
es que me pongo a pensar
Aquella vida pasada
de mi niñez añorada
Con una madre y hogar...
Quién pudiera comparar
una casa tan sagrada
cuando vive es ignorada
Si está muerta; es un altar...*

*Madre es un mandamiento
Cada madre es un portento
Símbolo de inspiración
para el hijo es bendición
del más noble sentimiento
es el amor el aliento
para el penado, consuelo
ella es caricia del cielo
donde no existe tormento
es la que en todo momento
te ofrece sin condición
como Días, la salvación*

en un sagrado mandamiento.

*El retrato de mi madre
Al contemplar tu imagen olvidada
En un rincón de mi cuarto desolado
En el ambiente obscuro y encantado Siento la dulce luz
de tu mirada
Que vigila mi sueño perturbado
Porqué al irte sigues a mi lado?
Como un ángel surges de la nada
Es que la madre que deja el hijo amado...*

For My Mother

By Michael Lopez

*Up to this day
I've never really known
How much my mother cares for me
or how she tries to show
That she loves me
Keeps me safe from evil
Teaches me the right things
Not to hang with bad people.
I'm getting older now,
And she knows I have to leave
Yeah, I'm growing up
But I'm only eighteen
And she knows that
But she don't even trip
'Cause she knows she brought me
up right
She knows I'm not a kid
Let's keep this poem short
So what I'm trying to say
Is THANK YOU MOTHER
For making me this way.*

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

What A Mother Means To Me

When you have your mother's love, that love of hers is the most special love you can ever have. Your mother's love takes care of you when your eyes have tears.

Your mother's words can make anything go away. Her words are so sweet and powerful. Her smile and understanding will make your thoughts brighter.

Your mother's love will never do you wrong. It's a love that no one else can ever give you because a mother wants nothing but the best for you. No one in this world will ever be able to give you a love like this.

~~~~~ by Edith Orsato ~~~~~

Mother's Day is a special day for me because I am the son of a special mother. It's a day to show how much you care about your mom and also, it is a day to thank her for what she has done for you.

I remember when I was small, my dad, sister and I would post little columns, a couple of lines long, in the Chicago Sun-Times saying, "Happy Mother's Day" to my mom.

Now I usually get her flowers and a card, and spend the day with her and my family at home. I usually cook a nice dinner for her and we have dinner as a family.

~~~~~ by Dan Vargas ~~~~~

A mother is someone who carries a baby in her womb for nine months. A mother is someone who goes through so much pain to bring another life into the world. A mother is someone who sticks with her children through thick and thin.

A mother is someone who cheers you up when you're feeling blue. Another is someone who never turns her back when you need a helping hand.

A mother is someone who, with just a touch of her hand, can make you feel better when you are ill. A mother is someone who gives out a unique love that no other love will ever compare. A mother is someone who is mother and father at the same time.

A mother is someone who will always love you for who you are.

A mother is someone who deserves a little for the sacrifices that she makes in life for her children.

That is what a mother means to me.

~~~~~ by Ysencia Ortega ~~~~~

*Dedicated to all those mothers who work hard
HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!*



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El Flamboyán

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**Important
Dates...**

Mother's Day
Aspira National Conference
Prom
Graduation

May 12
May 16-18
May 17
June 22